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Prospects for Resumption of START: Soviet View

Summary

There has been no apparent softening in Moscow's official conditions for resuming nuclear arms control negotiations with the US. The Soviets continue to insist publicly and privately that the US first must halt the deployment of its missiles in Europe and take steps to remove them. They also have denounced any linkage of START and INF to their proposed meeting in Vienna on the demilitarization of space. They are unlikely to reopen START or INF talks in any forum during the next half year although their interest in finding some way back to the talks may increase after the US election.

There is little direct evidence of how the Soviets envision the format of renewed nuclear arms negotiations. Their basic choices include reconstituting separate START and INF forums, shifting some components of INF into START, or combining the two sets of talks into a single negotiating forum. Each of these options has some drawbacks, and no single one appears ideal from the Soviet perspective.

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### Soviet View of Resumption

As recently as 21 July, Soviet Premier Nikolay Tikhonov stated that if the US would remove the "obstacles" which led to the breaking off of the Geneva talks, the Soviet Union "would not be found wanting." He warned that the USSR, however, would not conduct talks while under the threat of US nuclear missiles stationed in Western Europe. [REDACTED]

The Soviet Union has denounced any linkage of START and INF issues to their proposed meeting in Vienna on the demilitarization of space. They have claimed that the US, by raising START and INF in conjunction with talks on space weapons, is setting unacceptable preconditions for a Vienna meeting. Soviet spokesman Leonid Zamyatin, for example, in an 18 July article in Literaturnaya Gazeta asserted that combining nuclear arms and space issues would result in the "blocking" of the space talks. Soviet insistence that bilateral agreement be reached on an agenda prior to the opening of the talks in part is intended to stop the US from formally raising START and INF issues in Vienna. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] opinion in Moscow was divided on the issue of linking space and nuclear arms talks. While the Soviets ultimately may acquiesce to the US raising these issues informally in Vienna, they are unlikely to address them in that forum. [REDACTED]

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Although a desire to put the US on the political defensive appears to have determined their tactics on resumption thus far, they probably have a genuine desire to achieve--through political influence and agreement--real constraints on US programs which they believe eventually could adversely affect their strategic posture and strain their resources. Should talks on limiting space weapons begin in September, and result in an improvement in the bilateral climate, Moscow may find it easier to return to discussions on strategic and intermediate range nuclear arms. They may begin the process by sounding out US intentions

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regarding the form and substance of renewed negotiations, possibly by using high-level, diplomatic channels. [redacted]

Future Negotiating Formats

There is little direct evidence of how the Soviets might envision the format of renewed nuclear arms negotiations. Some Soviet diplomats and academics unofficially have raised the idea of merging the START and INF talks. However, Soviet spokesmen such as General Nikolay Chervov and Central Committee official Vadim Zagladin, have publicly dismissed the idea. [redacted]

The Soviets nonetheless appear to have laid the groundwork for incorporating limitations on the Pershing II and GLCM into their current START proposal. Their proposed reduction to 1800 strategic nuclear delivery vehicles, for example, is contingent upon no increase in US "forward-based" systems, specifically the US Pershing II and GLCM--systems which the Soviets regard as "strategic." Their proposals to ban long-range GLCMs and to prohibit the deployment of ballistic missiles in third countries from which they can strike Soviet territory also in effect links the Soviet START and INF positions. [redacted]

[redacted]

It would appear that the Soviets have left themselves considerable latitude regarding the format of the future negotiations. Their basic options include reconstituting separate INF and START forums, shifting some components of the INF agenda to START, or combining the two sets of talks into a single negotiating forum. The following highly speculative analysis, which is not based on concrete evidence, describes possible Soviet approaches. [redacted]

Reconstituting Separate Forums

Given Soviet preconditions for resuming INF talks, it probably would be difficult for Moscow to return to the INF forum as previously constituted absent US steps to restore the pre-deployment situation. Nonetheless, the Soviets may calculate

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that keeping a separate INF forum, thereby avoiding the complexity of combined talks, could offer a more expeditious route to securing an agreement which would limit ongoing US INF deployments. [redacted]

The Soviets could change the terms of reference of the INF talks, perhaps offering to trade off US LRINF deployments and their "counterdeployments" and insisting on their right to maintain an SS-20 force Europe equivalent to French and British nuclear forces. Alternatively, they might attempt to resurrect a modified "walk-in-the-woods" proposal, making it contingent upon US withdrawal of Pershing IIs from Europe. In conjunction with such proposals the Soviets almost certainly would call for a moratorium on US LRINF deployments in return for a halt in their "counterdeployments." [redacted]

If the Soviets decided to reconstitute the INF forum, they would have the option of resuming START where it left off last December, unencumbered by the problems posed by INF and third country systems. They could return to their current draft treaty proposal calling for reductions to 1800 SNDVs, subceilings on MIRVed missile launchers and ALCM carriers, and limits on modernization similar to those in the SALT II Treaty. They probably would continue to oppose the current US build-down proposal and the proposed ceiling of 5000 ballistic missile warheads, seeing these measures as efforts to force them into restructuring their strategic forces away from ICBMs. They might be more receptive to these measures if the build-down ratios were less discriminatory with respect to ICBMs. They also might be amenable to a compromise where they would propose a figure for aggregate delivery vehicles and Washington would propose a figure for ballistic missile warheads; similar arrangements on aggregate delivery vehicles and MIRVed missile launchers were worked out at Vladivostok in 1974 and in Moscow in 1978. [redacted]

Even if the Soviets were not confident of reaching an agreement in the reconstituted INF forum, keeping the talks separate in such a fashion could enable them to pursue START negotiations [redacted]

#### Shifting Components of INF Into START

P-II and GLCM. Another approach the Soviets could take would be to shift the Pershing II and GLCM into the START negotiations, asserting that these are "strategic" systems. They could attempt to exclude their own "medium-range" systems from START under the rationale that they cannot reach US territory and that they are needed to offset French and British nuclear systems. (C)

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One way the Soviets could incorporate the Pershing II and GLCM into their START proposal would be to raise their 1800 ceiling on strategic nuclear delivery vehicles (SNDVS) to include US INF systems. The Soviets have often stated that they would have to "reconsider" their proposed 1800 SNDV limit once US LRINF deployments began. The Soviets also could suggest an aggregate ceiling on nuclear warheads and bomber weapons that would include US LRINF systems along with central strategic ones. [REDACTED]

This approach would build on the foundation already laid by the Soviets for including US LRINF in START and would be consistent with the Soviet contention that the SS-20 is an offset to French and British nuclear forces. Furthermore, it would have the advantage of penalizing the US by counting the Pershing and GLCM against the US total for strategic systems while exempting the SS-20s from the Soviets total. [REDACTED]

The Soviets would realize that the US would reject such an approach as one-sided and would demand the inclusion of Soviet "medium range" systems in the negotiations. The Soviets would be likely to counter this demand by insisting that under such circumstances French and British nuclear systems also would have to be taken into account in START. Such an approach could quickly become stalemated as the sides argued over the agenda and would hold little prospect for an expeditious agreement limiting US LRINF deployments. [REDACTED]

In a variation of this approach, the Soviets could propose including the Pershing II and GLCM and some Soviet LRINF missiles in START while excluding French and British nuclear forces and an equivalent and offsetting number of SS-20s. By including some SS-20s in START, Moscow could try to counter US claims that the Soviet approach was one-sided. [REDACTED]

French and British Forces. The Soviets also could attempt to shift French and British nuclear systems to the START agenda but leave US and Soviet LRINF systems in a separate negotiating forum. Such a move could pave the way for the two sides to reach an INF agreement on equal levels of LRINF missiles in Europe. The Soviets might consider such an approach if they were seriously concerned about capping US LRINF deployments at the lowest possible level and were convinced of NATO's resolve to carry through with the deployments. [REDACTED]

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Combining START and INF into Single Forum

In this option the Soviets could place US and Soviet central strategic systems, US FBS, third country systems, and all Soviet LRINF missiles and aircraft on the agenda of a single negotiating forum. Numerous possibilities would exist for negotiating tradeoffs and limitations under such an arrangement:

- Limiting the Pershing IIs, GLCMs, third country systems, and Soviet LRINF missiles under one ceiling with a separate ceiling for US and Soviet central strategic systems.
- Limiting all strategic and theater systems under a single overall aggregate ceiling, possibly with subceilings.
- Including Pershing IIs and GLCMs under the US ceiling for strategic nuclear delivery vehicles while limiting Soviet LRINF missiles under a separate collateral constraint, possibly linked to French and British nuclear force levels.
- Trading off "concessions" on SS-20 reductions, third country systems, and US FBS aircraft in return for withdrawal of Pershing IIs, a ban or limitation on SLCMs, strict limitations on ALCMs, or a relaxation of throw weight limitations.

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While perhaps offering the Soviets more flexibility in terms of negotiating tradeoffs, a single negotiation treating all these systems could become extremely complex and drawn out. Meanwhile US INF deployments presumably would be continuing. The Soviets thus might be inclined to make a proposal for merged negotiations contingent upon US acceptance of a moratorium on its LRINF deployments while negotiations were ongoing. [REDACTED]

#### Conclusion

While the Soviets have a number of options for the format of renewed negotiations, each has some drawbacks and no single one is ideal from their perspective. A key factor influencing Moscow's approach will be the depth of its concern about stopping US LRINF deployments at the lowest possible level and its willingness to do so via a negotiated settlement. [REDACTED]

The issue of French and British systems probably will remain a focal point of the Soviet position in any future discussions with the US regarding the resumption of negotiations. Although the Soviets are primarily concerned with stopping US LRINF deployments and limiting US strategic programs than with forestalling the future increases in French and British nuclear forces, they can use the issue as a negotiating lever in either START or INF. [REDACTED]

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ANNEX

Soviet View of Key START Issues

Long-Range Cruise Missiles. Early in both START and the INF talks the Soviets proposed a ban on deployment of all long-range cruise missiles regardless of basing mode. Later at START they modified this position by agreeing to permit ALCMs [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. This move was not surprising because they had already agreed to limit ALCMs in the SALT II Treaty. [REDACTED]

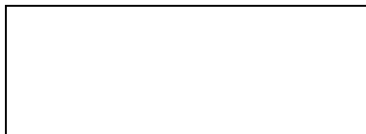
Throughout START the Soviets have claimed that the US proposal would allow Washington to deploy 8,000 ALCMs. They derived this figure by multiplying 400 bombers (the US-proposed ceiling) by 20 (the US-proposed limit for ALCMs per bomber). They have criticized the US reductions proposal by adding the 8,000 total for ALCMs to the 5,000 ceiling on missile warheads and claiming Washington really intends to build up its forces to 13,000 nuclear weapons. Although exaggerating US deployment plans, the Soviets seem to be genuinely concerned about the prospect of a proliferating ALCM threat during the 1980s. [REDACTED]

Perhaps equally worrisome to the Soviets are US plans for SLCM deployments. Suspicious of Washington's intentions, they noticed that SLCMs were not mentioned in the Scowcroft Commission report. [REDACTED]

The Soviets might be willing to accept a tradeoff of systems to limit US cruise missile programs. However, we do not know what compromise along these lines they might suggest or accept. For Moscow to agree to any significant reduction in its ICBM force, it probably would want at a minimum to see SLCMs and GLCMs banned, ALCMs sharply limited, and some amelioration of the prospective US threat to the remaining Soviet ICBM force. This last requirement could include restrictions on the Pershing II, the Peacekeeper (MX) ICBM, and the D-5 SLBM. Even with these, we believe that the Soviets would still be hesitant to make substantial reductions in their ICBM force. [REDACTED]

Heavy ICBMs and Throw Weight. During 1983 several Soviet officials in Geneva and elsewhere hinted that the SS-18 heavy

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ICBM would eventually be retired, partly because it was based on old SS-9 technology. Soviet Ambassador Karpov, however, made it clear in July that Moscow had no intention of "dooming the heavy ICBM to extinction." In laying out the subceilings in their START proposal, the Soviets made no explicit commitment to reduce their current force of 308 SS-18s. They expressed a willingness to discuss this issue, but only on the condition that Washington accept the Soviet negotiating framework. [REDACTED]

It is difficult to judge the extent of Soviet flexibility on heavy ICBM and throwweight. Soviet flexibility on this issue may depend largely on whether the SS-18's military mission--to attack hardened targets--can be assumed effectively by other ICBM systems. [REDACTED]

View of Verification in START. The Soviets realize that the Administration has declared an improved verification regime essential to negotiating arms control agreements. In a November 1981 interview with Der Spiegel, General Secretary Brezhnev stated that some forms of verification besides the primary method of national technical means might be worked out given confidence between the two sides. Even before the Brezhnev statement, Soviet negotiators at the Comprehensive Test Ban talks had agreed in principle to challenge on-site inspection procedures and the use of seismic sensors to monitor compliance with test ban restrictions. Since November 1981 Moscow has displayed greater flexibility on verification--particularly on the inspection issue--in the MBFR negotiations and in international forums that have considered chemical weapons and civilian nuclear reactors. [REDACTED]

The Soviets have been more circumspect, however, in addressing verification in START. They have insisted that verification provisions should be worked out only after the final shape of an agreement is clear. They have reacted negatively to US statements that some on-site inspection measures might be necessary. Nevertheless, they have stated a willingness to consider cooperative measures, pointing to those negotiated in the SALT II Treaty as examples. [REDACTED]

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The Soviets clearly anticipate START will have to deal with major verification issues such as monitoring SLCMs and mobile ICBMs and telemetry encryption. The Soviets have indicated a willingness to discuss measures for SLCMs, but they maintain that a ban on deployment would be the best means of solving the verification problem.

The Soviets have not been responsive to US concerns regarding telemetry encryption either in START or in discussions at the Standing Consultative Commission. They have argued that the United States should provide a list of parameters whose encryption in telemetry channels on Soviet missile flight tests has, in the US view, impeded verification. They know that Washington is reluctant to do so because it must protect intelligence sources and methods.

The Soviets may view their hint of improved verification provisions as a bargaining chip in the negotiations. This view appeared to be more evident in the INF talks than in START.

Moscow's apparent willingness to go further on verification in START than they were in the SALT II negotiations may reflect a belief that some movement on this issue is necessary in order to reach an agreement. They probably are ready to exchange more detailed data than they did in 1979 and perhaps to accept counting rules and some limited cooperative measures and collateral constraints. Although they will still insist that national technical means are paramount, they may be open to ideas

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on supplementary measures. They might have some flexibility on on-site inspection, but this would hinge on how intrusive the procedures are and what the prevailing climate is in US-Soviet relations. [REDACTED]

Confidence-Building Measures. The Soviets have agreed to establish a working group to discuss confidence-building measures (CBMs) in START. However, they are suspicious that the United States would attempt to exaggerate the significance of any separate CBM agreement while the major issues on weapons limitations remain unresolved. Until they see greater progress on the central issues, they are unlikely to agree to negotiate a CBM agreement in START. They appear to be more serious about bilateral communications measures that Washington has proposed.

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